Marching for unilateral disarmament

SAN FRANCISCO TO MOSCOW

December 1, 1960 – October 8, 1961

HOW THE MARCH BEGAN

The idea of the march to Moscow emerged during the Polaris Action demonstration in New England, USA, during the summer of 1960. It was taken up by the American Committee for Non-violent Action, which had sponsored the Polaris Action protests against the building and launching of Polaris submarines.

CNVA has been engaging in direct action demonstrations against nuclear weapons since 1957. They organised and took part in a protest at the Nevada Desert atomic testing area in 1957; the voyage of the Golden Rule, which tried to enter the US Pacific testing area at Eniwetok in 1958; and the civil disobedience demonstration at the Omaha missile base in 1959. These are some of the more dramatic demonstrations from CNVA's record of opposition to US and Western military policies.

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But once the San Francisco to Moscow Walk left New York it became an international venture. Among those who joined the team of 17 Americans were British demonstrators, a French girl, two Belgian students, a volunteer from Holland, two Norwegians, and marchers from West Germany, Sweden and Finland. Not all those who joined the main team were eventually able to go all the way to Moscow, and they joined the march at various points between London and Hannover.

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Ad hoc committees for the march were set up in most of the European countries directly involved. Support was drawn from pacifists and other Left-wing groups, but there was no official co-operation in any Western country with branches of the World Peace Council. Individuals from all organisations were welcome to join the march in their own country, but only those fully committed to the policy and discipline of the march could join the main team.

In its European phase the American-initiated walk was merged with a similar project initiated by Inge Oskarsson from Sweden and gained its new title "American-European March".

The marchers' leaflet

This is the leaflet—printed in six languages—which the marchers distributed along their route across Europe:

WE ARE WALKING TO MOSCOW

SOME of us have walked from San Francisco, almost 4,000 miles, to the Capital of the United States—Washington D.C.

For we are equally opposed to the armaments of the East and West. We are marching for unconditional disarmament NOW.

The most effective way to any disarmament today, we believe, is for some nation to start scrapping its weapons. When one country disarms first, it opens the way for others to do the same. Some nation must find the courage to act first.

In each country we pass through we are calling on the government to give up nuclear weapons unconditionally and to discard military pacts based on them. These pacts intensify the Cold War.

H-bombs and missiles are totally evil. They can kill millions of people outright, destroy thousands more slowly from burns and radiation sickness, and harm future generations. We cannot without protest let our own governments use these weapons in our name. And any country which has H-bombs and missiles, for whatever reason, is in fact willing to use them.

In the nuclear age war is outdated. It cannot deal effectively with major conflicts, and any war is likely to become a nuclear war. Dependence on arms must therefore be rejected.

In this new situation we believe that non-violence such as Gandhi used for the freedom of India, and the Norwegian teachers used in resisting Hitler—can best defend and enlarge freedom and justice.

All governments should therefore end conscription, start to do away with armed forces, and turn to Gandhian non-violence to defend freedom and resist tyranny and oppression.

BREAD NOT BOMBS

The world is full of hunger, disease and poverty. We believe that the Soviet Union and the United States with other countries should pool their resources to remove such suffering—by using the money now wasted on weapons of destruction.

We are appealing above all to the ordinary people in every country we walk through to take personal action and to work for the unconditional renunciation of arms by their own couuntry. In Moscow and in every capital city on our route we shall say what the American Marchers have already said in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States:

"At this stage disarmament can be achieved if one nation is prepared to take a first step in giving up its arms as an example for others to follow."

WE CANNOT BE SILENT

Some of us act out of religious conviction, others out of commitment to ethical values, and we are united in opposing modern war. Because humanity is in such grave danger of destruction, we are determined to speak what we believe to be true. In our own countries we have all urged the renunciation of mass violence. And we shall continue to do this. Some of us have joined demonstrations for disarmament. Others have refused to pay taxes for war, or have refused military service, or have protested at missile bases and atomic plants, or refused to work in industries making arms. As a result some of us have been arrested in our own countries and have spent time in prison.

WE SHALL SPEAK

This is our record. These are our beliefs. We hope to be able to speak out freely wherever we go. Within each country we will insist on distributing our literature, holding our banners and talking with the people. Because we believe the discussion of our ideas is vital, we are prepared to go to prison if prevented from carrying out our march or spreading our beliefs.

We believe that peace can only come when nations give up dependence on military force and turn to the kind of power Gandhi used in India. We therefore urge you, according to your convictions, to act for peace now!

This is an extract of the Peace News Supplement Oct. 20Th 1961 without the reports on the section in the USA, in Belgium, Poland and the Sovoiet Union

England

FIFTEEN American marchers arrived at London Airport on June 1. They were met by reporters and cameramen, recorded a hurried television interview and set off in the rain to walk into London.

On Sunday, June 4, the marchers were given a send-off in Trafalgar Square at a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament rally attended by about 6,000 people. The team walked through Hammersmith, Staines, the missile town of Bracknell—where they held a factory gate meeting outside Sperry Ltd., a manufacturer of missile components—to Reading. Here Bradford Lyttle, the march leader, spoke to an audience of 200 in the Town Hall.

At Aldermaston the team held a three-hour vigil, leafleted the workers when they went home, and spent the night camped opposite the gates. Then on to Thatcham and Newbury, where open-air meetings were held. Early Saturday, June 10, a vigil was held outside the Greenham Common US airbase. Over the weekend the team were joined by up to 200 CND supporters on the road to Basingstoke and Winchester.

Monday, their last day on the road, took them to Southampton. Just beyond Winchester they availed themselves of the traditional "wayfarers' dole" of bread and ale from the St. Cross Hospital, which has been the due of all travellers along this road since the Middle Ages, when the monks dispensed hospitality. The marchers were welcomed in Southampton by the Mayor and accompanied through the town to the docks.

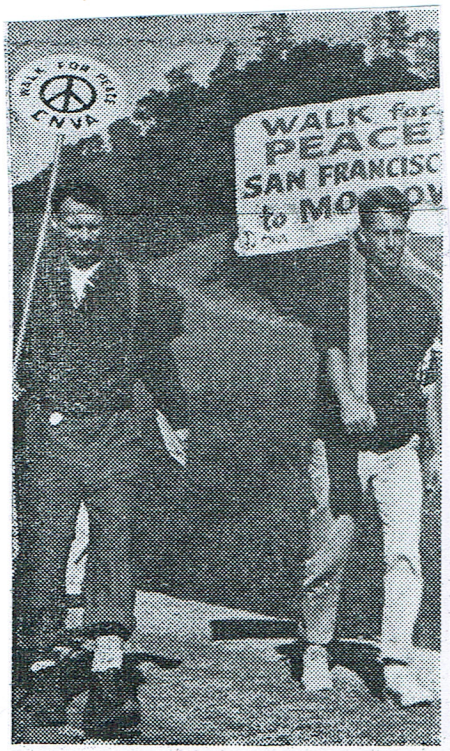
The national press, TV and radio gave some space to the American team when they arrived in London, but paid very little attention to the Trafalgar Square rally and then forgot about the marchers until they were barred from entering France. Both the team's demonstrations at Le Havre were well publicised in British papers. The march did not make news again until the civil disobedience demonstrations at West German bases and the team's expulsion from East Germany; both events attracted a few paragraphs in various papers.

No notice was taken of the team's entry into the Soviet Union, but the press suddenly woke up to what was happening and became excited on October 2, when the marchers picketed a military installation on the outskirts of Moscow. Press, radio and TV coverage of the five days in Moscow was very full and on the whole very fair, making clear the marchers' policy. The Red Square vigil, the Moscow University meeting and the visit to Mrs. Khrushchev elicited some front-page coverage, photographs, and appreciative editorial comment in *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*.

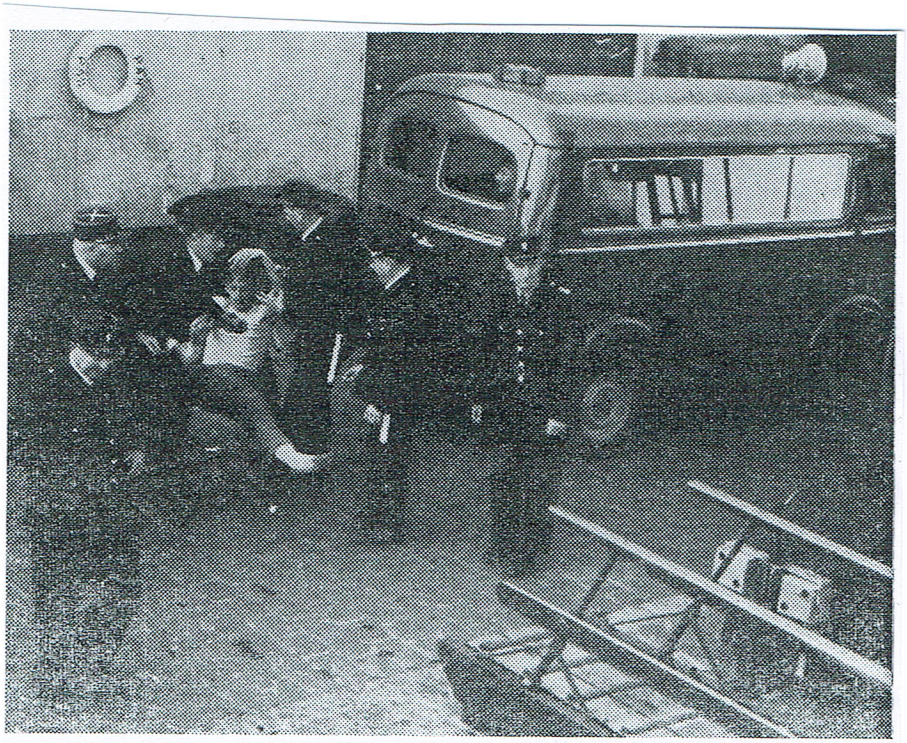
In England the march found a ready response among the nuclear disarmament and pacifist organisations, who were glad of the double opportunity of welcoming Americans who were vigorously opposing US military policies, and of associating themselves with a venture which was taking the message of unilateral disarmament into the Communist countries. The marchers enabled CND to show it was not anti-American, but was working with groups in the USA against American Government policies; and that it was not pro-Russian policies, but anxious to communicate the idea of unilateralism to the Russian people.

The English phase of the march was important for the marchers themselves for two reasons. It marked the transition from an all-American project to an international one. In London British and Scandinavian volunteers joined the march and French and Belgian representatives spoke in Trafalgar Square. Secondly it gave the marchers a jumping-off point for the continent. By allowing the marchers in, the British set a favourable precedent, and the CND Trafalgar Square rally gave the march a certain political prestige in both West and East Europe.

Because of the tradition of the Aldermaston marches, direct action demonstrations and Committee of 100 sit-downs, the actual impact of the march while in England was probably less than on the continent. There was plenty of local press coverage along the route, but this tended to emphasise irrelevancies like the Bohemian appearance of some of the English accompanying marchers, though some local press stories clearly indicated the march policy. However, the successful conclusion of the march and its widespread publicity should have a favourable impact on public opinion if the reactions of the Right-wing papers themselves are any kind of guide.



At an early stage in California: Scott Herrick (left) and Barton Stone. Both went on to complete the march to Moscow.



Le Havre gendarmes carry Barnaby Martin, 22-year-old British marcher, back aboard the Normannia on the team's first attempt to enter France. He was dragged up the gang plank and severely bruised.

France

THE only country which refused the team permission to enter was France. When the marchers were due to arrive there a state of emergency had been declared as a result of the attempted coup by Right-wing Generals in Algeria, and all demonstrations were officially forbidden.

The marchers initially crossed over from Southampton to Le Havre on Monday, June 12. They were not allowed ashore. After long discussions with French officials a group of five marchers jumped overboard and swam to the shore in protest against the ban on entry.

The events of this period are given in more detail below in a series of extracts from letters and reports written at the time.

Robert Kingsley (American marcher who was not picked up by French police), Le Havre, June 13 :

Today at precisely 6.34 p.m. I, and four other members of the march, jumped off the British Railways ship *Normannia*. We landed in the water near the quay and swam ashore.

We began distributing our wet leaflets. Presently a policeman came up to Regina and led her away. The crowd immediately closed around me. I eased back to find out what the other swimmers were doing.

Still no arrest. One of the French supporters put his coat around me; another gave me a cigarette. My host approached me and suggested we go for coffee. Many photographers kept snapping pictures and I was soaking wet. We walked boldly over the quay to a small coffee shop. Again photographers appeared and took pictures . . . the proprietress rushed at them and scolded them severely.

A car appeared outside . . . we drove to my host's home. Pierre, our French contact, came in and was all smiles.

During my meal my host, Pierre, and I discussed the next step. We agreed to continue the walk with French supporters. Pierre says that we cannot expect to walk far before we are arrested. The press and police have been notified.

Pierre Martin (French organiser, who had come over with team from Southampton but was as a French national allowed ashore), June 14, 5 p.m. : Dear A. J., I am in the train back to Paris with Robert. This is the situation now : (1) Only two French supporters left Le Havre this morning for Bolbec. (2) As the police don't ask for Robert he wrote a letter to General de Gaulle asking for a personal appointment. When we arrive in Paris we will get in touch at once with the American Embassy.

The journalists are calling without interruption to know the developments but we gave them nothing this morning. The three local papers were very sympathetic —United Press reporter told me that he was offered 50,000 francs for the set of photos of the jumpers. I just saw that *France Soir* (more than 1,000,000 readers) gives also a photo and small article.

It is a very great help for the non-violent movement in France. I hope to be at AUT. 86-38 tomorrow morning 'till 10.30 if I am not arrested.

Pierre Martin, Paris, June 15, 3 p.m. : Dear A. J., The French Committee and most of the town councils on the road between Le Havre and Rouen have officially protested against the decision of the Minister of the Interior. I suppose that the French Government is afraid that the march may crystallise all the opposition to the Algerian war, especially when it is breaking the negotiations with the FLN. The sympathetic support we get in the press, even the non-Left press, seems to show that it is right on this point.

I received the news that the two French marchers had all banners and leaflets confiscated, but could enter Bolbec with banners on which it was written "Censored", and nothing else.

April Carter (European Organiser), London, June 16. Memo to European Contacts : The marchers were sent back to England from Le Havre at 11 p.m. Tuesday night and arrived in Southampton at 6 a.m. Wednesday, June 14.

The team's plan is now twofold : (i) To make all possible representations to the French authorities in Paris, London and New York to get permission for the team to enter; (ii) To make a second attempt to enter France some time next week.

In Paris Professor Kastler, President of the French Federation Against Atomic Armaments, has made an official approach to de Gaulle, and A. J. Muste is flying to Paris today in the hope that with the assistance of Professor Kastler he can obtain an interview with the Minister of the Interior for members of the team.

Text of press release issued in London on June 20 : Two marchers set out on June 14 for Bolbec. The French police confiscated the marchers' banners and leaflets, and detained them two and a half hours. However the march has been allowed to continue with those walking wearing signs protesting against the fact that the team were not allowed to enter. According to news received from Paris today, six people are now walking, including one Algerian and the son of an Algerian "Colon" (settler). This group was greeted in Vernon by the Deputy Mayor of the town. The French marchers reach St. Germain on the evening of June 20 and enter Paris on June 21.

A. J. Muste, Paris, June 22. Memo to New York : France is in a near state of war. Almost every day the Right sets off a plastic bomb or two; Algerians may shoot up police or anti-FLN Algerians. A police state exists; police do what they please, open mail, etc. Plans are made quietly to have walkers rendezvous at a certain spot in Paris outskirts—the police are there before you arrive.

April Carter, London June 23. Memo to New York and European Contacts : The team re-embarked at Southampton on Wednesday evening, and left again for Le Havre aboard the *Normannia*. No obstacles were placed in their way by the British Emigration Authorities or by British Railways, who own the boat.

When the boat docked at Le Havre the team were again refused permission to land and in the afternoon 14 of them jumped overboard, and swam ashore (five others walked down the gangplank). There were many people watching, Brad placed the figure at 1,500, and members of the team were able to distribute their leaflets and make brief speeches. There were plenty of press men and film cameras in evidence.

The police detained most of those who had swam ashore until just before the boat left for Southampton at 11 p.m. Thursday night. Then the team were hastily put aboard, but the Captain was in such a hurry to cast off to prevent further demonstrations that the police did not have time to send all the demonstrators aboard, and they were left in a police van when the *Normannia* sailed. As the ship cast off Phil Leahy jumped overboard again. So there are six still in France.

The rest of the team are going straight to Belgium. They should catch the boat this evening and will be met at Ostend by the Belgian Committee. They will then be taken straight to Rummen for a weekend conference on non-violence and a work camp. They will then start marching from the French-Belgium border on July 2. The team and Belgian Committee will meet at the border the group of French people who have been carrying on the march across France.

A. J. Muste, London, June 25, Memo to New York. Report on Thursday, June 22, demonstration at Le Havre: The clippings from *Paris Soir*, the mass circulation paper in France, *Paris Normandie* (the paper for North-West France) Le Havre local paper and *Le Monde* will have preceded this note. We even got a couple of paragraphs in *Figaro*. To get on the front page in *France-Soir* and columns with pictures in *Paris-Normandie*, at a time when thousands of peasants are rioting not far away, the German President is visiting France, etc., represents a real break-through.

Our French pacifist friends are immensely enthusiastic over it and others are impressed. Pierre Martin who was on dock at Le Havre says 80 per cent of 2,000 people watching were pro-team.

Left over in France when main body were transported back to Southampton Thursday night were six of the team. Before I left Paris, Saturday afternoon, conferences and phone calls resulted in understanding that all six would be put on boat to Southampton Saturday evening. Police also agreed that if Kingsley went to Le Havre he would be given his passport there and allowed to go back with rest.

A. J. Muste, Report to Peace News, July : The French marchers endured such hardships, inflicted by the French police, as the men being dragged by their ears and the women by their hair. They were arrested twice in Paris and several times altogether. More than once their banners were confiscated. Two men walked the total distance through France, They were Mohamed Braham of Algeria and George Avadia. Mohamed Braham is a 24-year-old bricklayer from Paris and a Moslem. George Avadia is a 34-year-old Israeli, also from Paris, and a chief accountant.

Other French marchers were : Jacques Drouet, 29, a humanist who has worked for the past three years with International Voluntary Service; Victor Savary, 23, a Protestant and student in mathematics; Claude Voron, 23, a Catholic from Marseilles and student in physics; Jean Neveu, 31, a Catholic and translator; Bernard Gaschard, a Catholic farm labourer; Jean-Pierre Hemon, 20, a Catholic and shoemaker; Didier Poireay, 21, Protestant, and student in fine arts; and Yvette Naal, 24, Christian Scientist, a secretary, who went on to Moscow.

Civil liberties in Western Europe

A MARCH of this character is inevitably a challenge to authoritarianism, and the degree of freedom allowed to the marchers in each country reflects to some extent the degree of civil liberty in that country. Because of its special international and political character the march may have had greater freedom than citizens in those countries doing the same things—this is certainly true of the Communist countries. But even in East Europe the differences in official attitudes in East Germany and Poland reflect two very different societies.

There were also very considerable differences in West Europe. The British authorities indicated early on that the team would be permitted to enter the country and carry out their march provided they did not outstay their welcome. When the French sent the marchers back to England the immigration officials gave them two weeks' grace, and both the British authorities and British Railways, who owned the Channel boat on which the team twice crossed to France, were co-operative and neither stopped the team going aboard nor prevented them demonstrating at Le Havre. While in England the team had the usual freedom to leaflet, carry banners, hold open-air meetings and picket military establishments.

When the marchers had twice been refused entry to France and the British authorities indicated they were not prepared to extend further hospitality, Belgium gave them "asylum" for a week before the march was due to start in Belgium. This saved the marchers from a nightmare of shuttling to and fro across the Channel with eventual deportation looming ahead. It is interesting that the Belgian Sûreté actually recommended the Ministry of the Interior to let the marchers in. (Their counterpart in the United States, the FBI, had a habit of preceding the march and discouraging local hospitality and support.)

The marchers were allowed a good deal of freedom in Belgium to leaflet, carry banners and hold open-air meetings. The only place where real difficulties developed was in the City area of Brussels, where the marchers were forbidden both to hold an open-air meeting and to picket the Belgian Defence Ministry.

The marchers had been told in advance that in Belgium demonstrations outside military bases or foreign embassies, or directed against royalty, were forbidden. But they understood some form of demonstration with restricted numbers would probably be allowed in front of the Defence Ministry.

The team never evinced any desire to test the ruling on diplomatic or royal immunity, but in practice they were allowed to confront the military but not the Minister of Defence.

When the team approached the Ministry they were informed that no type of demonstration whatsoever could be held in the area on which the Ministry stood. The team then found an alternative place, just outside the Brussels City area, and directly on the route of the march. It was a Defence Ministry building which houses also the Belgian control centre of NATO. It was therefore in some ways more suitable than the Defence Ministry proper, symbolising also Belgian involvement in the NATO Power bloc. It also had advantages as a site being near a military barracks and set in a large square where there was an open-air market. In the end the marchers held a silent vigil for an hour outside, though they were not allowed to carry their banners or distribute leaflets there. The team also picketed one of Belgium's largest air bases, at Brussen—where leaflets were confiscated as soon as they were handed out—and an arms factory at Herstal, where 1,200 leaflets were distributed.

In West Germany the marchers encountered considerable difficulty on civil rights issues. The march entered West Germany on July 15 at Aachen on the Belgian border. They began to encounter restrictions from the authorities within a few days. As they prepared to enter Bonn on July 19 they were told by a police inspector that they could enter the city in one group but should not distribute leaflets nor carry any banners other than the lead banner. Later in the morning the police agreed to relax the ban on leaflets and banners but made the marchers keep in one group and proceed in double file along the outer edge of the pavement. At a meeting held in the centre of Bonn at noon word came that the marchers should not directly ask the German people to refuse to pay taxes, refuse work in arms industries, or refuse military service, though they might inform the Bonn crowds what had been asked of people in America, Britain and Belgium.

Again, as they neared Cologne, the team was informed that orders had been received from the Ministry of the Interior that they should not distribute leaflets. The team decided to sit down until the freedom to leaflet was restored, and the police chief of Wuppertal finally decided that leafleting would be allowed until the team reached the centre of Cologne. The marchers replied they would only walk as far as they could leaflet. In the end they continued leafleting all the way.

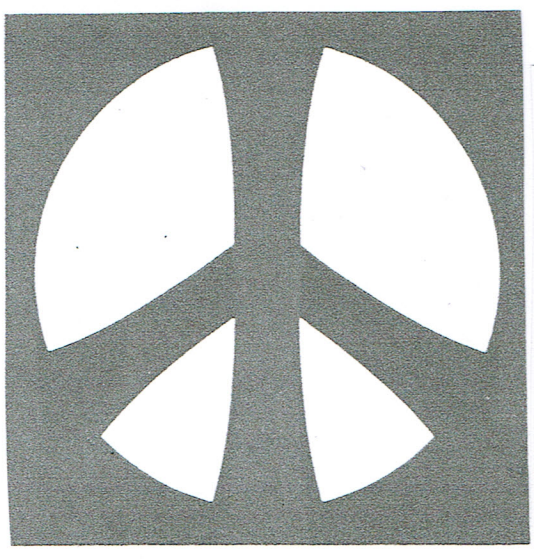
On July 24 in Dortmund the marchers were allowed to leaflet in groups of three to five on the streets, but not to carry banners. In the afternoon they leafleted at one of the gates of the largest steel factory in the Ruhr valley. The next day in Werne they wanted to hold an outdoor meeting, but this was refused.

From the moment the march entered West Germany it was re-routed several times by the police without consultation so as not to pass directly by places of military importance. Representatives from the march, when attempting to obtain permission for demonstrations at these places, were told by the police that they were forbidden to demonstrate at either the Defence Ministry in Bonn or at military establishments in the provinces of Rheinland-Westfalen or Niedersachsen. While the team was told many times by the police that official orders had been issued forbidding them within "shouting distance" of military establishments, no copies of these orders were obtainable and there is apparently no law which prohibits these demonstrations.

In order to maintain the consistency of the march the team decided to hold four demonstrations at military installations on August 3: at the Defence Ministry in Bonn, at the Dortmund-Brakel NATO barracks, at the Niedersachsen recruiting headquarters in Hannover, and at the Bergen-Hohne military base.

Bonn Defence Ministry: The demonstration at the Defence Ministry was swift and dramatic. The original plan was to assemble at Friedenplatz at 8.30 a.m. to meet with the press and then distribute leaflets until 9.30 a.m., then to walk to the Defence Ministry with banners and leaflets for a silent vigil until 6.0 p.m. The police were notified in advance and the demonstration was forbidden.

On the morning of August 3 the demonstrators were stopped almost as soon as they left the house where they had been staying and were told to enter a waiting



THEIR BANNERS

These were the slogans on banners carried on the march:—

We urge all nations to abandon nuclear weapons now.

We urge all nations to disarm unilaterally.

We urge all nations to abandon military pacts.

We urge all nations to solve conflict through non-violence, not war.

We urge all people to work for disarmament.

Divert money from military to overcome poverty.

police van. They were taken to the police station where an officer asked them if they knew the demonstration was forbidden and they would be punished if they carried on with it. To their surprise at 9.30 a.m. they were released and their banners and leaflets returned to them. They walked to the Friedenplatz, a large square in the centre of the town, followed by police and photographers. When they arrived at the point they were going to demonstrate they waited a few minutes before holding up their banners as they knew these would be confiscated, and wanted a crowd to collect who would see and understand what was happening. A crowd did collect quickly; also a police officer came up almost immediately and spoke to one of the demonstrators, who turned to the others and said: "You may as well hold up the banners. We're under arrest." They complied and within fifteen seconds the banners had been snatched from them. Then they sat down on the pavement and were loaded into a waiting van. There was a large crowd of fascinated onlookers and the whole scene was well recorded by TV and press cameras.

The demonstrators were tried that afternoon. They admitted the charges and received a sentence of 25 marks each or one day in prison. Barnaby Martin (a British team member) who had led the demonstration, received 50 marks or two days. They refused to pay the fines, but instead of being jailed were allowed to go free.

At the Dortmund base four team members and a German supporter continually had leaflets and banners confiscated. Several leaflets were accepted, however, and taken into the base, but pressure from British military police at the gate discouraged men from taking leaflets. About 4 p.m. 15 police moved in and carried the demonstrators into police vans. They were held in the cellar of the Dortmund police station until 6.0 p.m. under the preventive detention clause. The police seemed interested and quite sympathetic; three of them asked for and pinned on the marchers' badges. This protest was also very well covered by press and TV.

The other two demonstrations were permitted by the authorities. The **Hannover** picket of the recruiting headquarters took place after two days of negotiation. In the end permission was given after the demonstrators had agreed that only four people should demonstrate at a time and the whole action only lasted three and a half hours. The group were allowed to hold banners and distribute leaflets. At 4.30 p.m. the demonstrators were invited by Captain Meyer, the HQ public relations officer, to have coffee and a discussion in the officers' mess.

The fourth demonstration at **Bergen-Hohne** went off without incident. Twenty marchers leafleted and displayed their banners from 11 a.m. to 6.0 p.m.

The West German authorities made no attempt to prevent the march continuing after August 3. The team crossed into East Germany on August 7.

West Germany

Helga Stolle, West German co-ordinator, comments:

THE march crossed West Germany during the holiday period; also many people who would have been politically interested in the march were busy with the General Election which was taking place in the near future. Nevertheless, we succeeded in focussing some attention on the march.

The thing that impressed most people was that the marchers were going on to Moscow. The man in the street admired the energy and the courage of the team, willingly accepted the leaflets, but altogether was more sceptical than sympathetic. There were not too many people attending the meetings, but those present were very enthusiastic and appreciative of the fact that the appeal of the marchers was directed to both the East and the West.

The press was very reserved and published only short news items about the march. The local papers published longer articles and sometime even pictures. The socialist papers were forbidden to report on the march, while the Right-wing papers did publish news about it. The civil disobedience actions attracted more attention throughout Germany; some local reports were very detailed and sympathetic, while the well-known newspapers reported what happened without comment. There were also various reports on radio and television.

The march was helpful for the disarmament movement in Germany because it intended to take the same message to Moscow and the Eastern states. On our Easter marches supporters of the Government had produced special leaflets calling upon us to go to Moscow. Now we—or our friends—were going! It was hard to overcome the barriers of resentment against any sort of individual peace work; nevertheless, there has not been any pacifist action for years which had so few allegations of "Communist" made against it.

In Bonn a West German plain-clothes policeman took banners from the marchers demonstrating in the Friedenplatz on August 3. (Left to right: Helmut Temme of Germany, Barton Stone of USA and Barnaby Martin of England.)

East Germany

Bradford Lyttle, American leader of the march, here gives a detailed report of the team's experiences in the Communist countries. He emphasises that the marchers' experiences in each of the three Communist countries had quite different characteristics. The climate for the march in Poland was quite different from that in East Germany, and Russia was in a world of its own. These Eastern countries differed from each other more than the countries of the West did.

THE marchers entered East Germany at Helmstedt on August 7, and the march continued in that country for seven days, covering about 150 miles. The German Peace Committee provided accommodation and mapped out the schedule. Food was plentiful and excellent. Marchers were told that they were eating commodities, such as butter and tomatoes, not available to the East German people. Accommodation was sometimes crude—straw spread on schoolroom floors, for example—but always dry and adequate. Medical care was maintained splendidly. The German Peace Committee saw that the marchers' trucks and equipment were kept in good repair.

All the usual banner slogans were carried in East Germany, but for six of the seven days marchers had to protest and resist (sometimes unsuccessfully) efforts by Peace Committee "supporters" accompanying the march to introduce banners carrying cold war slogans, slogans which criticised West German armaments but excused East German military policies.

There was no hindrance to the distribution of 15,000 leaflets, but on several occasions "supporters" were seen confiscating these leaflets from children and others who had received them, and then destroying them.

On the first evening of the march in East Germany, Peace Committee officials seriously proposed to collaborate in the writing of a new leaflet to express the peace programmes of both organisations, and which would supercede the previously approved leaflet. The marchers rejected this proposal.

No fewer than six different leaflets were distributed by "supporters" in addition to the approved leaflet. Sometimes these were inserted into the march leaflet, and sometimes nailed to trees along the route. They all contained bitter attacks on West German policies, and excused those of East Germany. The marchers vigorously protested at this, but Peace Committee officials condoned it by saying that "the time is ripe for all genuine appeals for peace," and that "they did not have the right to deny freedom of political expression to their countrymen."

Three or four public meetings were held at which the Burgomaster of towns along the route officially greeted the marchers. Once, during a halt called in protest against the introduction of "supporters'" leaflets, a spontaneous meeting developed in a village with 75 curious and mostly sympathetic citizens.

In East Germany the marchers were unable to see, let alone demonstrate at, any military establishments. They were also unable to speak to any responsible Government representative. Press, radio and television coverage was very slight, and omitted reference to any part of the programme which clashed with official policy.

Surveillance was constant and strict. A police officer was with the project at all times, as well as three or four Peace Committee representatives, and some 30 or 40 "supporters"—a different group each time the march entered a new political territory. Whenever a marcher left the main march, a supporter would try to go with him. Whenever a march vehicle travelled ahead or lagged behind it was joined by a car or motor-bike driven by a "supporter." "Supporters" also kept a night watch over the marchers. When the march in East Germany was ended at Muhlenbeck, north of Berlin, the "supporters" carried the marchers bodily to the bus which then took them back to West Germany.

The East German authorities planned the route of the march to avoid most cities and large towns and all military establishments. Individual marchers were allowed to leave the main body and go into the towns in the evenings and mingle and talk with the people.

Authorities took different attitudes towards East and West German pacifists who tried to join. On August 7 a Quaker family coming from Dresden to join were detained and interrogated by the police, and encouraged to go home at once. A West German march organiser was allowed to accompany the project for several days, but he decided to go home after the authorities had subjected him to heavy pressure. A medical student from Dresden stayed with the march unmolested for seven days, but when the marchers were involuntarily transported back to West Germany he was detained, severely reprimanded for his sympathy with the project, and then released.

The march was allowed to take unlimited 35mm snapshots; 16mm motion picture photography was also permitted, though the authorities were worried about one of the marchers, a film cameraman, who often rode ahead or behind to get his shots. They insisted that he be always accompanied by an "interpreter." Since several of the marchers were West Germans, and others of them spoke German, there was never any language problem.

East Germany is a stricken nation. It was in a state of crisis when the march entered, and the crisis abruptly deepened and became an alarm for world war on August 13 when the Government announced that free access between East and West Berlin would end. Villages through which the march passed were lifeless—collective and state farm fields poorly cultivated. Marchers were told that 75 per cent of the Leipzig University graduating class was expected to flee to West Germany. A school principal spoke with tears of the many obstacles facing their "social experiment," and the meaninglessness of teaching children who lived in a country whose future was a shadow, a shadow that might be war.

It is obvious that the East German Government is waging an intense propaganda campaign for its policies. In even the tiniest villages there are enormous political posters and prominent slogans. Pictures of Walter Ulbricht frown from the walls of every public building. Saturation leafleting of the population is undertaken at every opportunity.

The official Government peace programme stresses fear and suspicion of the Adenauer Government. Monetary and other cold war tactics employed in West Berlin to weaken the East German economy and undermine her Government excite nothing but hatred in East German authorities. The official and public attitude towards the US was, of all the Communist countries visited by the march, the most unfriendly in East Germany.

POLICY AND POLITICS

THE marchers were calling for unilateral disarmament by every country they passed through, East and West. They advocated that all nations abandon reliance on war preparations and turn to non-violent action as an alternative means of defending freedom; and they appealed to all people to take individual action to obtain unilateral disarmament by their country.

The marchers represented the radical tradition of Western pacifism. In their own countries some had been to prison for demonstrating at missile sites or refusing military service. Their "record" was presented in the leaflet, and constituted an indirect advocacy of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. In their speeches the marchers were accustomed to present this challenge directly. Much of their policy was presented verbally—in Poland and the Soviet Union the team had their own interpreter, though official interpreters were also provided.

In order to symbolise their opposition to the military policies of each country the marchers wherever they could picketed the Defence Ministries and military bases along the route.

continuation

The march did not set out to be a civil disobedience action but a symbolic demonstration which in liberal democracies would be considered "constitutional." However, the marchers were committed to undertake non-violent civil disobedience if they were not allowed to enter any country, or if their message were obscured by denial of the right to leaflet or hold meetings for example. Although the march did not intend to be a demonstration for civil rights it inevitably became one to some extent. The group were frequently faced with the problem that if they took a firm stand on some civil rights issue they were jeopardising the future of the march.

Inevitably the marchers ran into national and international crises which created very special problems for them. Should they insist on trying to march through France in a state of near civil war, or through a Berlin which had become a beleaguered city? In the event they tried to do both and were prevented, but were able to take up the march again in the next country.

The resumption of Soviet tests also had an effect on the march. Unfortunately the leaflet, written months earlier, was not able to take account of this development. But in talking with people in Russia and in the interview with Mrs. Khrushchev the team were able to stress this point. Because of international tension, and possibly internal problems as well, the team's stay in the Soviet Union was cut from six to three weeks. This created immense physical difficulties, as the team were determined that the march should not become a ride.

The marchers did not have an easy time in East Europe in any sense of the word. It was often physically exhausting. They had difficulty in communicating their alien ideas to the people—those most understanding were those who had been in the West. They had difficulties with the authorities and the Peace Committees.

But their achievement was considerable. In the Soviet Union, where officially the Government and people are one—"how can we protest against ourselves?" people would ask—and where all peace demonstrations represent Government policy, they marched advocating policies totally opposed to the official line. In Moscow University they evoked a significant response from the students—a response cited by Isaac Deutscher in *The Observer* as an example of intellectual dissent.

It is remarkable they got to Moscow and that the Communist authorities allowed them to do so with the degree of freedom they had. It may be that in both East and West the marchers achieved more directly for the cause of civil liberties than they did for peace; but the two are not unrelated.

'A deep impression'

A final word from the British press. The Daily Telegraph *published a front page report on October 7 from Jeremy Wolfenden, their man in Moscow*:

The disarmament marchers may not have had much impact on the ordinary man in the Moscow street, if only because few of them speak Russian. But where they have met English-speaking people of their own age they have clearly made a deep impression.

Their discussion at the university yesterday was prolonged by nearly two hours beyond the time planned. Official representatives of the students made speeches condemning the policy of unilateral disarmament.

But the marchers had several notes handed to them in which the writers said: "Don't take any notice of these official speeches. We do not all think like that."

The Guardian *commented editorially the same day*:

The 30 Western students who have gone to preach nuclear disarmament in Moscow have achieved a remarkable feat. Not only have they been seen in the streets of Moscow. They have expounded their ideas to students at Moscow University; when the university authorities tried to close the meeting (apparently because the hall was needed for another purpose) the students shouted them down and insisted on going on.

This is far from a trivial happening. In a dictatorship any public outbreak of forbidden ideas is significant; it becomes widely known even if nothing is reported in the press. The ideas may not make any converts; the students who are reported as saying "We don't agree with them, but let them talk" probably meant what they said. What matters is that they have heard it suggested that their Government is as much at fault as those of the West.

Published by Peace News Ltd., 5 Caledonian Rd., London, N.1, and printed in Gt. Britain by Goodwin Press Ltd., London, N.4.